



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES
AMMAN· JORDAN

Middle East and North Africa Hub Activities Report

August 01 – August 14, 2010

Middle East and North Africa Women in Science Hall of Fame



Reem Hamdan
Electrical Engineer, Jordan

Reem Hamdan ranked 13th in Jordan's rigorous college entrance exams, an accomplishment which opened the world of possibilities for her future. She selected one of the toughest disciplines to pursue at Jordan University, and was one of two women who received a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering in 1993. Reem chose a demanding career in a profession few women choose. She started at the Jordan Electricity Authority and participated in electrical privatization and restructuring studies to assist the company in unbundling its business into generation, transmission, and distribution entities. She documented this process in a paper she submitted to the International Council on Large Electrical Systems (CIGRE)

<http://www.cigre.org/> in

2006. Of the 100 papers which CIGRE selected for its 15th annual conference, Reem's study of the impact of privatization on electrical distribution was awarded 1st place. As Director General Assistant for Regulation and Planning at Jordan's Electrical Distribution Company (EDCO), Reem is currently studying the best way to reduce carbon emissions, employ renewable energy, and implement smart grid. Reem has balanced her demanding career with a happy family life revolving around her husband and three children. Even now, only 5% of EDCO employees are female, and most of them work in clerical positions. Reem has established herself as a credible scientist with keen analytical abilities and the vision to plan for Jordan's future electrical requirements in a sustainable way. For more photos, follow this link:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=204882&id=36736912815&ref=mf>

Federation of American Scientists to Forge Ties with Yemeni Scientists: ESTH Hub Officer met with representatives of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) en route to Yemen. FAS has a program to promote project-based partnerships between young environmental scientists and engineers from the U.S. and those countries with which the U.S. has limited scientific and formal government relationships. Yemen is FAS's test country for its International Science Partnership (ISP), a program which seeks to find solutions to environmental issues faced by the U.S. and other countries. The pilot project in Yemen will focus on the delivery of water and energy to high desert, interior urban environments—a challenge facing both Yemen and the U.S. Both countries have considerable expertise. The

two FAS scientists are staying in Sana'a through the third week in August to meet with energy, water, and environmental researchers from the Water and Environment Center at Sana'a University and the faculties of engineering at Sana'a, Aden, and Hadramout Universities. They hope to forge relationships with these Yemeni scientists and to engage them in developing the ISP, including the selection of potential participants.

EarthCorps International Learning Program: EarthCorps is offering a program in Seattle, Washington from June 6 - December 8, 2011 to bring together emerging environmental leaders so that they can learn the fundamentals of environmental services, community building, and leadership. EarthCorps will provide insurance, individual home stays with local families, food, gear, and a monthly stipend to all international participants. It will also assist participants in navigating through the U. S. J-1 visa process. Before you nominate a candidate, please make sure that he/she meets the following criteria: 18-25 years of age, conversational English, no criminal record, 4 year college degree in an environmental field and 1 year of relevant work experience, or 5 years of work experience in the environmental field. Interested candidates should be referred to EarthCorps by an environmental organization (e.g., NGO, community group, university, or student club.) Materials are available online at: http://www.earthcorps.org/join_international.php. Separate application materials will be sent to the candidate after confirmation of his/her nomination. For further information, please contact Mark Howard, Senior International Program Manager/Responsible Officer at EarthCorps, at Tel: +1-206-322-9296 ext. 224 or email: mark@earthcorps.org

Green Screen II: The ESTH Hub met with the Royal Jordanian Film Commission, the British Council, and the French Culture Center to start preparations for this year's Green Screen II. Last year the Hub and the Public Affairs section at Embassy Amman joined forces with other diplomatic missions in Jordan to organize the first environmental themed film week in Amman, with outstanding results. The four-day festival showed films from Jordan, France, the Netherlands, the U.K., and the U.S. that tackled hot environmental issues. This year, we'll again screen films at the Royal Jordanian Film Commission and plan associated events, including opening and closing receptions hosted by the different missions, around the October 10-14 timeframe. We hope to expand our audience to schools, universities, and NGOs through other side events. Through Public Affairs, the Hub requested a renewable energy speaker and has procured a renewable energy film produced in the U.S.

Green Team Meeting: The ESTH Hub recruited new faces for Embassy Amman's Green Team, and met with the expanded group. We discussed the activity matrix that the team developed over the past six months. Among the new initiatives that we will be pursuing are compost training for the staff, family members, and household help; a trip to a recycling/collection center; recruitment of new team members; and promotion of green practices among employees like carpooling. We will be publishing utility bills for Mission housing and offering prizes to those households that decrease energy consumption in comparison to previous year levels. The Amman Green Team has a new email address too! AmmanGreenTeam@state.gov

Meeting with CMC Amman: The ESTH Hub met with Ryan Whalen, our colleague from Sandia Labs who is currently stationed in Amman in support of the National Nuclear Security Administration's Cooperative Monitoring Center (CMC-Amman). CMC-Amman has been going strong for seven years at its beautiful facility at the Royal Scientific Society. Its focus areas are: nonproliferation; energy security; environmental security; public health; and renewable energy planning. CMC's workshops have trained Jordanian and regional participants on the application of technology for border security, resource management, arms control, explosives detection, and public health. Other examples of current technology

demonstrations at the CMC-Amman exhibit hall include environmental monitoring and assessment, commercial satellite imagery, sustainable land use, and disease monitoring. Additional capabilities will be added as new projects develop. Ryan told us that they plan to change the Center's name, since too many people associate "monitoring" with intelligence gathering, which is not related to any of the CMC's projects or goals.

Meeting with RSCN: The ESTH Hub met with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) Director Yehya Khaled and his senior staff for Wildlife Enforcement and Conservation. The RSCN staff explained their NGO's various activities and the role they play in assisting the Government of Jordan in managing protected areas and wildlife. There are currently seven protected areas in Jordan, with plans for another nine by the end of 2020. RSCN's outreach division is currently working with the Ministry of Education to improve the environmental content in school curriculums. They have also helped establish "nature clubs" at schools throughout the country. Their biggest challenge is the continuous pressure which development projects put on natural areas and the lack of government understanding on the importance of maintaining these areas as wild habitats. Among RSCN's other frustrations are incomplete and weak environmental impact studies and insufficient capacity building and resources for staff who work in protected areas. The constant change of leadership among the Environmental Rangers, one of the major enforcement bodies that partners with RSCN, also negatively impacts the continuity of enforcement. We were impressed with the dedication and commitment of this organization to expand protected areas despite these many obstacles.



Welcome To WorldWideScience.Org, Your Gateway for Scientific Research! WorldWideScience.org uses federated search to provide its encompassing coverage of global science and research results. Unlike some popular search engines that only search the surface web, it drills down into the deep web, which contains a vast amount of scientific and technical information. It also provides equal access to science across language barriers through the use of complex translations technology. WorldWideScience.org allows the user to search multiple data sources with a single query from the user interface. When the user enters a query in his/her preferred language in the search box, the query is translated and sent to every individual database or portal searched by

WorldWideScience.org. The individual databases and portals send back a list of results. WorldWideScience.org then ranks the hits from all the sources in relevance order, giving the user the option to translate each page of results. The user can review this hit list and travel to the host site of a particular hit for more detailed information such as the bibliographic citation, abstract, and in many cases, the full text of the document. There are currently nine languages supported by WorldWideScience.org: Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Search results are as current as the individual databases and portals themselves.

Other News:

Greening Your Ramadan! Tips for a Healthier, Greener Ramadan: Last year, the Council of Islamic Organization of Greater Chicago launched a successful initiative called "Green Ramadan". The initiative encouraged Muslims to eat locally, drink tap water, recycle, and educate themselves about climate change and what they can do to save the planet. Ramadan is a great opportunity for public diplomacy, and I encourage posts to seize the opportunity and organize outreach events to promote a "greener" way of life and encourage the public to adopt healthy, environment friendly habits. Here are some tips from the Green Prophet Blog that you can share with your contacts for a "greener" Ramadan:

Be Healthy: Fasting is a great way to lose weight and cleanse the body from toxins.

Eat Locally: Eat less red meat and chicken and more fresh, locally produced fruits and vegetables. A lot of organizations such as Islamic Relief are now encouraging Muslims to buy fair trade as well as free-range and organic goods. Get in touch with these organizations and help spread the message. This Ramadan could also be the perfect opportunity to switch to organic halal meat.

Use less water: Use tap water instead of bottled. Be frugal when washing the body with water before prayer. Prophet Mohammad used only half a liter of water and instructed Muslims on conserving water even at a running spring.

Waste less: Encourage people to buy less, use less, and then recycle what's left behind. If you are organizing a public Iftar, don't use tons of plastic cutlery. Ramadan is a great opportunity to give back to the community, so suggest swap events, potlucks, fundraisers, and community events. And don't forget about Eid (celebrating the end of Ramadan) -- make your own hand-made, recycled Eid cards!

Spread the message! Ask imams to do a Friday prayer talk on the issue of caring for the environment, including encouraging Muslims to become more aware of their environment and the impact their behaviors have on the world.

GLOBAL – How to Run a Successful Science Outreach Event: This guide, published by the Institute of Research for Development (IRD), gives advice on how to organize and manage a public science outreach event, including tips for successful science communication. To view the guide:

http://www.latitudesciences.ird.fr/outils/guide/ird_handbook_science_educators.pdf

[Source: SciDev.net]

MENA - Calling All Divers on September 25 to Join "Project Aware"! This massive volunteer event is the largest of its kind, and is organized by the "Project Aware" Foundation. "Project Aware" Foundation is a nonprofit organization that partners with scuba divers and water enthusiasts from more than 180 countries and territories around the world to combine efforts to conserve aquatic resources. The MENA region is no exception, and several cleanup campaigns will be organized this coming September 25. Go to the link to find out who organizes the cleanup campaign in your country and join!

https://www.projectaware.org/search/cleanup_events.php [Source: projectaware.com]

MENA – U. S. 'Science for Development' Promises: It's Time to Act: An editorial on President Obama's Cairo speech theorized that delivering on the "science for development" promises will help the Obama administration regain trust within the developing world. The editorial follows a recent meeting of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) in Washington that highlighted both the commitment to science for development and the urgent need to meet expectations. For the full editorial:

http://www.scidev.net/en/editorials/us-science-for-development-promises-it-s-time-to-act.html?utm_source=link&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=en_editorials [Source:

SciDev.net]

MENA - Nuclear Power Is Far From Optimal Choice for Arab States:

A Lebanese journalist says the Middle East's nuclear energy ambitions amount to a status symbol that should be replaced with decisions based on efficiency, safety, and communal good. <http://www.yalibnan.com/2010/08/09/nuclear-power-is-far-from-optimal-choice-for-arab-states/> [Source: Ya Lebanon online news website]

JORDAN - Disi Water Conveyance Project 28 Percent Complete and Source of 500

New Jobs: Turkish company GAMA, implementer of the construction portion of the Disi Water Conveyance Project, has completed 28% of the work needed for the pipes that will be

placed in the trenches located along the desert highway. These trenches extend from the Al Qastal area (near Queen Alia International Airport) all the way to the border with Saudi Arabia. The company reported that 500 jobs have been created since the project began. [Source: local media outlets]

JORDAN - Government Exempts Donations to RSS from Sales Tax: The Government of Jordan has decided to exempt gifts and donations to the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) from general sales tax, excluding vehicles. The equipment that RSS sends outside the country for repair and maintenance reasons will also be exempted from customs and sales tax upon re-importation. [Source: local media outlets]

JORDAN - Government Increases Preparedness Against "West Nile Virus": The Jordanian Ministry of Health (MOH) has raised its alert level for the West Nile Virus out of fear that it might enter the country. In a media conference MOH Director of Primary Health Care Dr. Basem Al-Hijawi described the disease's symptoms and assured the public that the epidemiological monitoring laboratory is working around the clock to prepare for any outbreak that may occur. [Source: Al-Ghad Newspaper]

JORDAN - Hybrid Trade-ins Set To Pick Up Soon: The Jordanian Minister of Finance announced on August 15 that the Ministry expects an increase in the demand to replace conventional fuel-driven cars with hybrids. In early March, the government decided to impose a 55% tax on hybrid vehicles entering the country after April 30, while allowing owners of conventional fuel-driven cars who replace their vehicles with hybrids to pay only 40 per cent of the hybrid car's value as tax. [Source: The Jordan Times]

JORDAN - Petra's Garbage Collectors Brave Stereotypes for a Better Life: Majed Hasanat, Director of the Petra Development Tourism Region Authority's (PDTRA) environment department, has announced PDTRA's success in training and employing 78 local residents as garbage collectors. Previously, a private waste management company provided the service at an annual cost of around 1.5 million Jordanian Dinars (about \$2.1 million). In April, PDTRA decided to create job opportunities by hiring local residents as garbage collectors. It recruited unemployed residents and souvenir vendors, including some who initially felt shame in accepting this type of work. Currently, 82% of trash collectors in Petra are local residents, and PDTRA aims to replace the remaining foreign trash-collectors with Jordanians by the end of 2011. [Source: The Jordan Times]

JORDAN - Agreement to Boost Breast Cancer Awareness in Ain Al Basha: Thousands of women in Jordan's Ain Al Basha area will soon learn about the importance of early breast cancer detection under an agreement between the King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Deloitte Jordan. The project seeks to raise the awareness of over 7,200 underprivileged women on the importance of self-testing as well as familiarize them with self-examination techniques. [Source: The Jordan Times]

JORDAN - Water Officials to Discuss Future of Red-Dead Project: According to the Jordan Times, Jordanian experts and water officials will convene in November to discuss the future of the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Study Program. During the meeting, the steering committee will discuss the progress of the feasibility study and the environmental and social impact assessment. Stakeholders will also review the results of the Red Sea and Dead Sea modeling studies, which were completed in July. [Source: The Jordan Times]

IRAQ - Joshua Mater Rebuilds Iraq One "Green" Mind at a Time: After his father died in 2002, Joshua Mater established the Michael Scott Mater Foundation (MSMF) to

create opportunities for individuals and communities by providing them with financial resources, workforce training, cross cultural exchanges and sustainable solutions to real world challenges. The international NGO is now working with Iraqi universities and ministries to implement change. For the full article: <http://www.army.mil/-news/2010/08/12/43581-402nd-afsb-civilian-helps-bring-sustainability-to-iraq/index.html> [Source: The U.S. Army Website]

IRAQ – A New Report from the Ministry of Environment on Nuclear Radiation: The Center for Protection Against Radiation and the Iraqi Ministry of Environment confirmed in a recent report that the water, air, and soil of Iraq are free of nuclear radiation. A ministry official said that the report revealed that radiation is limited to certain places, including the former Tuwaitha Nuclear Complex and the steel plant in Basra. [Source: Iraqi Environmental Blog]

U.A.E. – Solar Power to the People of Abu Dhabi: Consumers of electricity in the United Arab Emirates capital, Abu Dhabi, will soon experience major changes in their electricity service. The Abu Dhabi Distribution Company (ADDC) plans to install meters in every building and a solar panel on every rooftop! While meters that measure a customer's consumption are common features in the West, they only recently began to appear in the UAE. Previously, people paid a flat rate for their electricity regardless of how much they used. As a result, there was little incentive for households to aim for energy efficiency. The new meters are digital, and will monitor power consumption throughout the day so the company can optimize its production and supply. For more details: <http://thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100809/NATIONAL/708089866/1018> [Source: The National]



Ismail Seraqeldin, Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina - Picture Courtesy of <http://www.bibalex.org>

EGYPT - Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Wins Environmental Award: Bibliotheca Alexandrina Director Ismail Serageldin has won the 2010 M.S. Swaminathan Award for Environmental Protection. He received the honor for his "outstanding contribution to the cause of environment protection." The award, given by the Rotary Club of India's

Madras East in cooperation with Cavinkare Private Limited, was presented in Chennai by former Indian Parliamentary Speaker Balram Jakhar. Serageldin set up the Global Water Partnership's secretariat in Stockholm and was its first chairman. He was also vice president of the World Bank's Sustainable Development Department and chairman of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Currently, he is director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a center for learning, dialogue, and understanding in Egypt. [Source: Ecooptionsegypt.com]